

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 OMB-01 /057 W
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R 220428Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4337
INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 2116

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, BG
SUBJ: INTERNAL FACTIONALISM WITHIN AWAMI LEAGUE CONTINUES

REF: DACCA 1760

1. THE SQUABBLE FOR LEADERSHIP OF THE AWAMI LEAGUE CONTINUES DESPITE THE COMPROMISE SELECTION OF BEGUM ZOHRA TAJUXDIN AHMED AS THE CONVENOR OF THE PARTY AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE RECENT PARTY CONCLAVE IN DACCA (REFTEL). AS REPORTED EARLIER, THE DISPUTING FACTIONS ARE LED RESPECTIVELY BY MIZANUR RAHMAN CHOUDHURY AND MATIUR RAHMAN. ONE OF THE ISSUES AT THE FIRST MEETING HAD BEEN WHETHER TO FORM A FULL-FLEDGED PERMANENT CENTRAL COMMITTEE (AS MIZANUR SUGGESTED), WHICH WOULD HAVE INCLUDED ONLY THOSE POLITICIANS PRESENTLY AVAILABLE TO THE PARTY, OR AS MATIUR RAHMAN SUGGESTED, TO FORM A TEMPORARY ONE-YEAR ORGANIZING COMMITTEE IN WHICH PARTY LEADERS NOW DETAINED IN JAIL WOULD BE AUTOMATICALLY INCLUDED IF THEY SHOULD BE RELEASED. MIZANUR'S PURPOSE I CALLING FOR A PERMANENT CENTRAL COMMITTEE WAS TO CONSOLIDATE HIS OWN PARTY POSITION, BUT HIS INFLUENCE WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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INSUFFICIENTLY STRONG TO CARRY THE PARTY. BEGUM TJUDDIN, PROPOSED BY MATIUR RAHMAN, WAS ELECTED INSTEAD AS A COMPROMISE CONVENOR AND GIVEN THE TASK OF SELECTING A ONE-YEAR ORGANIZING COMMITTEE.

2. ON APRIL 15, THE NAMES OF THE FORTY-FOUR MEMBERS OF THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE WERE ANNOUNCED. ALL THE

FAMILIAR NAMES WERE INCLUDED EXCEPT THAT OF FORMER ACTING AL PRESIDENT MOHIUDDIN AHMAD, WHO IS REPORTED TO BE UNDERGROUND AVOIDING ARREST. WHEN THE LIST WAS PUBLISHED, IT WAS ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT PRESENTLY DETAINED PARTY LEADERS WOULD AUTOMATICALLY BECOME COMMITTEE MEMBERS UPON THEIR RELEASE. THE LATTER PROVISION, A SETBACK FOR MIZANUR'S FACTION, HAS LED TO RUMORS THAT MIZANUR MAY RETALIATE BY NAMING HIS OWN ORGANIZING COMMITTEE.

3. ALTHOUGH IDEOLOGY DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE THE PRIMARY CAUSE FOR THE FACTIONALISM, IT IS NONETHELESS PRESENT: MATIUR AND ZOHRA TAJUDDIN ARE LOOSELY DESCRIBED AS "LEFTIST", "PRO-INDIAN", AND "PRO-SOVIET", WHILE MIZANUR REPRESENTS THE "BOURGEOIS" MAINSTREAM OF THE AWAMI LEAGUE WHICH FINDS THE "SOCIALISM" PILLAR OF MUJIBBAD PRINCIPALLY A LITURGICAL DEVICE. SIMILARLY, MIZANUR AND ZOHRA WOULD ENSHRINE THE "FALLEN LEADERS" -- MUJIB AND THE MINISTERS KILLED IN NOVEMBER, 1975 -- IN A PANTHEON WHILE MIZANUR SEES MUJIB AND HIS RECORD AS A POTENTIAL ENCUMBRANCE TO POLITICAL SUCCESS IF AND WHEN ELECTIONS ARE HELD.

4. WERE MIZANUR TO PROCEED WITH SETTING UP A RIVAL COMMITTEE, LESSER LIGHTS IN THE PARTY WOULD NO DOUBT JUMP WHICHEVER WAY THEY THOUGH THEIR OWN NESTS WOULD BEST BE FEATHERED -- WITH IDEOLOGY TAKING SECOND PLACE TO OPPORTUNISM. HOWEVER, THE PARTY WOULD BE RENT, PARTIALLY ALLEVIATING THE FEARS OF THE MARTIAL LAW REGIME ABOUT A POSSIBLE FUTURE AWAMI LEAGUE RESTORATION AS THE GOVERNING PARTY OF BANGLADESH.

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